



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

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MILLIONS OF AMERICANS PARTICIPATE IN WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATION, NATIONAL SURVEY RESULTS REVEAL

Hunting, fishing, and birdwatching continue to rank among America's favorite pastimes, according to a survey by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The 1991 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation reveals that more than 108 million Americans 16 years of age and older participated in some recreational activity involving fish and wildlife, pumping \$59 billion into the national economy through the purchase of equipment, travel, lodging, and other goods and services.

"Enjoying our natural resources is an important part of America's heritage," said Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt. "It's a great way to be refreshed and renewed, and it's the gateway to the conservation experience. But there are economic benefits as well. The \$59 billion Americans spent on wildlife-related recreation in 1991 represents almost one percent of the nation's economic activity and helps create thousands of jobs."

Forty million Americans age 16 and older either hunted or fished during 1991, while 76.1 million enjoyed nonconsumptive activities such as feeding, observing, or photographing wildlife.

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Overall, 35.6 million people age 16 and older spent an average of 14 days fishing in 1991, while 14.1 million people spent an average of 17 days hunting.

Anglers spent \$24 billion, or an average of \$674 each, and hunters spent \$12 billion, or \$851 each, on their sport. Another \$5 billion in spending by hunters and anglers could not be attributed solely to one or the other sport.

Among anglers, 31 million people age 16 and older fished in freshwater and 8.9 million in saltwater. Anglers spent \$11.8 billion in trip-related costs, including \$5 billion on food and lodging and \$2.8 billion on transportation. In addition, they spent \$9.4 billion on equipment.

Among hunters, 10.7 million people age 16 and older hunted big game, 7.6 million hunted small game, and 3 million hunted migratory birds. Hunters spent \$3.4 billion on trip-related costs, including \$1.8 billion on food and lodging and \$1.3 billion on transportation. They purchased \$5.2 billion in equipment during 1991.

Americans age 16 and older spent \$18 billion to pursue nonconsumptive wildlife-related recreation in 1991. This included \$7.5 billion for trip-related expenses, including \$4.4 billion for food and lodging and \$2.6 billion for transportation. More than half of their expenditures, \$9.6 billion, were for equipment.

Thirty million people age 16 and older took trips away from home for nonconsumptive wildlife-related recreation while 73.9 million enjoyed wildlife around their homes.

The U.S. Bureau of Census interviewed 128,000 households in the United States to determine participants in wildlife-associated activities. From this initial phase, 68,000 individuals were selected to be interviewed by telephone three times at four-month intervals during 1991.

Children 6 to 15 years old were not included in the second, detailed phase of the survey. However, using both 1985 and 1991 data, the Service estimated there were 1.4 million hunters, 9.5 million anglers, and 14.5 million nonconsumptive participants in the 6- to 15-year-old group in 1991.

The results of the 1991 survey are not directly comparable to the results of past surveys because the methodology was changed to improve accuracy.

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In the past, respondents were asked at the end of a 12-month period to recall their participation and expenditures related to fishing, hunting, and wildlife-related recreation for the previous year. But research in recent years has revealed that people tend to overstate their participation and expenditures when asked to recall over such a long period.

As a result, the Service asked the Census Bureau to change the methodology of the 1991 survey so respondents were contacted every four months. The 1991 survey, therefore, far more accurately represents actual participation and expenditures than previous surveys.

To determine trends in wildlife-related recreation, however, the Service was able to compare the data from the initial screening phase of the 1991 survey with that of past surveys because the methodology was not changed for that portion of the survey.

According to these trends, the number of anglers 6 years and older rose 10 percent from 1985 to 1990. The number of people hunting remained constant during that period.

The number of people 6 years and older who enjoyed wildlife observation, feeding, and photography on trips away from home increased by 9 percent from 1985 to 1990. However, the number of people enjoying these activities close to home decreased by 5 percent.

The cost of the 1991 Survey was paid by the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration and Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration accounts, which are funded through excise taxes on sporting arms, ammunition, fishing equipment, pleasure boats, and motorboat fuels.

Copies of the 1991 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation are available from the Publications Unit, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mail Stop 130, Webb Building, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Arlington, Virginia 22203. The telephone number is (703) 358-1711.